NOSTALGIC 1950s EC COMICS!

CRIME

NO. 7
MAY

# CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

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COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE!
AN ILLUSTRATED TERROR-TALE FROM THE HAUNT OF FEAR!

# BACK ISSUES!!

THE COMIC YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS IS PART OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL, FACSIMILE REPRINTING OF THE **FAMOUS** (AND INFAMOUS!) **EC COMICS** LINE OF THE EARLY 1950s! WE STARTED WITH THE **FIRST ISSUE** OF EACH TITLE AND ARE ON OUR WAY TO THE **BITTER END!** GET ON THE BANDWAGON, AND **FILL IN THE GAPS** IN YOUR COLLECTION FROM THIS BACKLIST!!

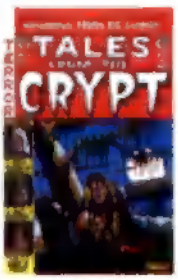
CRYPT #1

CRYPT #2

CRYPT #3

CRYPT #4

CRYPT #5



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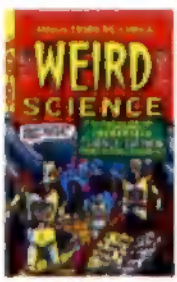

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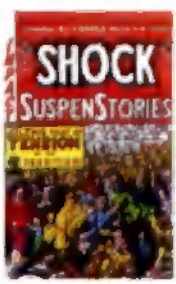
SHOCK #1



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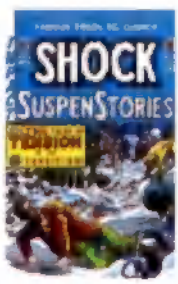

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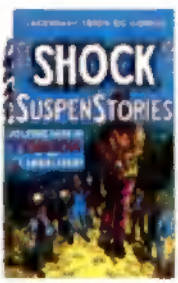

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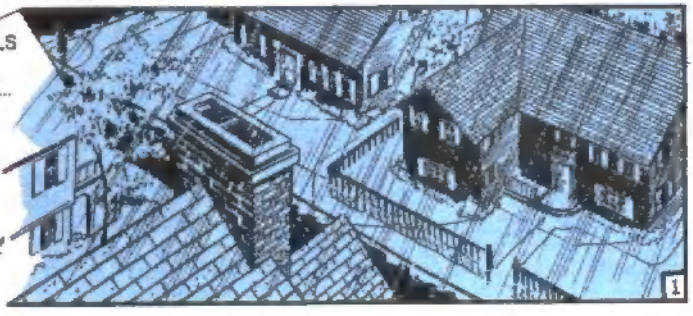
# HATCHET-KILLER!

Star
HATCHET-KILLER
STILL AT LARGE

THE SLEEPING SUBURB OF WESTFALLS LIES HUDDLED UNDER A DRENCHING TORRENT OF RAIN... HUSHED...TENSE... EXPECTANTLY AWAITING THE LIGHT OF DAY THAT IS BUT A FEW HOURS HENCE. PEOPLE RESTLESSLY TOSS AND TURN IN THEIR BEDS, AND THE RAINDROPS SOUND LIKE A MILLION SOFTLY FALLING FOOTSTEPS THAT HERALD THE APPROACH OF DEATH!



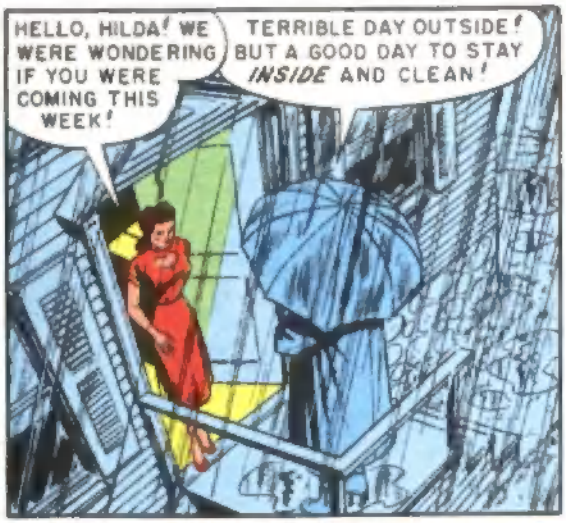
A BOLT OF LIGHTNING FLASHES THROUGH THE BLACK SKY, AND THE FOLLOWING CLAP OF THUNDER MOMENTARILY DROWNS THE RAIN'S WHISPERINGS. THEN ALL IS STILL AGAIN...AND THE SHROUD OF FEAR SETTLES ONCE MORE...

WHAT MAKES AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY DREAD THE OMINOUS NIGHT? WHAT IS IT THAT CAUSES A MAN TO LEAP FROM HIS BED UPON HEARING A STRANGE NOISE AND PEER ANXIOUSLY THROUGH THE RAIN-STREAKED WINDOW PANE?

THE ANSWER LIES IN THE RAIN-SWEPT STREET, IN THE HEADLINES OF A SOPPING, THREE-DAY-OLD NEWSPAPER...

AN UNKNOWN, MANIACAL KILLER! *THAT* IS THE REASON FOR THE TENSION...THE FEAR... THE MANY DREAMS...

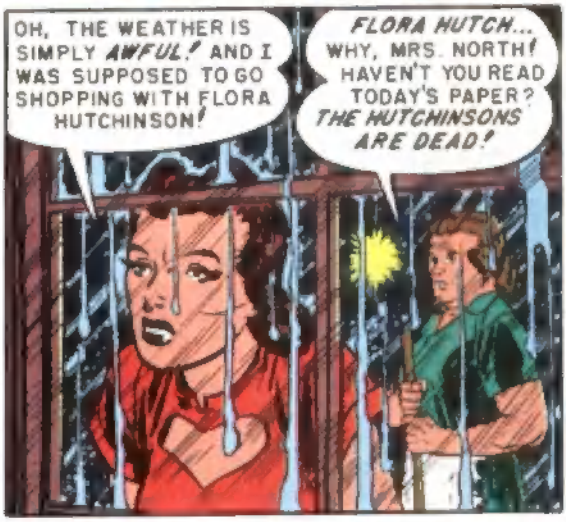
I'LL HAVE TO BE LEAVING FOR WORK SOON...DON'T WANT TO MISS THE TRAIN! HILDA COMING TODAY?
THE PART-TIME MAID? YES, I... OH, THERE'S THE DOORBELL...


HELLO, HILDA! WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU WERE COMING THIS WEEK!
TERRIBLE DAY OUTSIDE! BUT A GOOD DAY TO STAY *INSIDE* AND CLEAN!

I'M GLAD YOU *DID* COME! YOU CAN KEEP MY WIFE COMPANY WHILE I'M GONE!
IS THERE SOMETHING THE MATTER, MRS. NORTH?

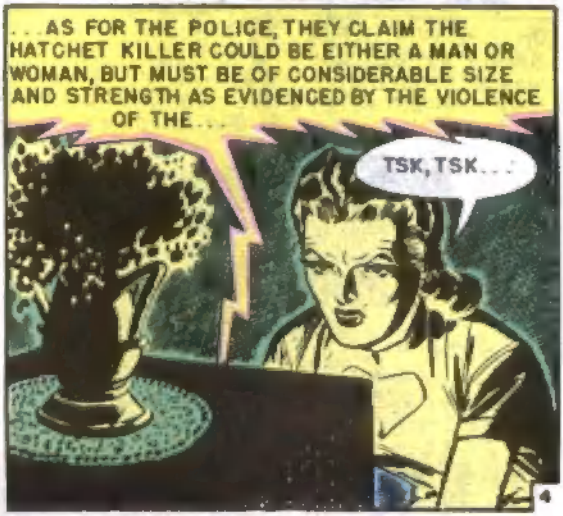
IT'S THOSE HATCHET-KILLINGS! THEY MAKE ME NERVOUS! I'M AFRAID TO BE ALONE!
WELL, DON'T YOU FRET ABOUT THAT! NO ONE'S GOING TO HURT YOU!

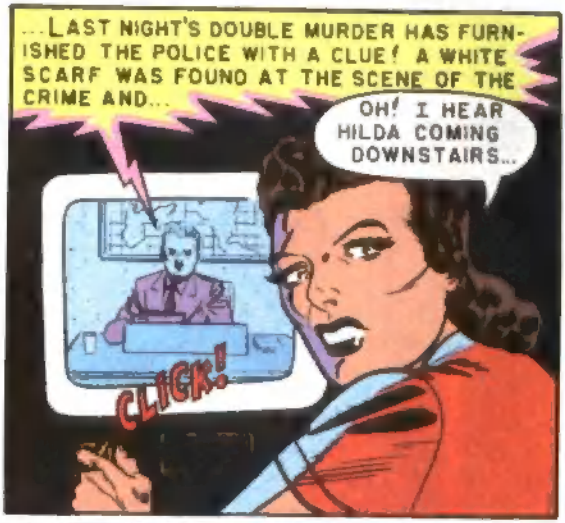
TIME FOR ME TO SHOVE OFF, HONEY! I'LL HAVE TO FINISH SOME WORK AT THE OFFICE, SO I WON'T BE HOME TILL LATE TONIGHT!
ALL RIGHT, DEAR! GOODBYE!


OH, THE WEATHER IS SIMPLY *AWFUL!* AND I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO SHOPPING WITH FLORA HUTCHINSON!
*FLORA HUTCH...* WHY, MRS. NORTH! HAVEN'T YOU READ TODAY'S PAPER? *THE HUTCHINSONS ARE DEAD!*

*DEAD?* WHY, HILDA...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE *HATCHET-KILLER,* MRS. NORTH! KILLED THEM BOTH WHILE THEY SLEPT! THEY WERE *HACKED TO PIECES!* HERE...READ IT!
KILLED
SLEEP

THE DAY PASSES SLOWLY AND THE RAIN STORM INCREASES IN FURY WHILE MRS. NORTH BUSIES HERSELF WITH HOUSE CLEANING TO KEEP HER MIND OFF THE HATCHET-KILLER!



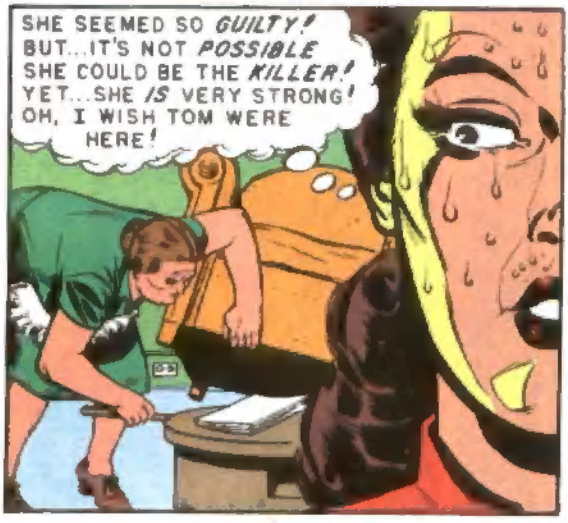

...LAST NIGHT'S DOUBLE MURDER HAS FURNISHED THE POLICE WITH A CLUE! A WHITE SCARF WAS FOUND AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME AND...
OH! I HEAR HILDA COMING DOWNSTAIRS...
CLICK!

...STILL WORRYING ABOUT THE HATCHET KILLER, MRS. NORTH?
WELL... A LITTLE, HILDA! I DO WISH THE POLICE WOULD CATCH WHO-EVER IT IS!

OH, THE KILLER IS SMART, ALL RIGHT.. BUT IT WAS A BIG MISTAKE TO LEAVE THAT WHITE SCARF WHERE...
HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

WHY... MRS. NORTH, I... I...ER...
I HEARD IT ON TELEVISION JUST A MINUTE AGO! HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?

I...I HEARD IT ON THE RADIO IN YOUR BED-ROOM!
...OH! I'M SORRY, HILDA! I DIDN'T MEAN TO...


SHE SEEMED SO GUILTY! BUT...IT'S NOT POSSIBLE SHE COULD BE THE KILLER! YET...SHE IS VERY STRONG! OH, I WISH TOM WERE HERE!

HILDA... I THINK WE'VE DONE ENOUGH FOR TODAY! YOU CAN GO HOME... IF YOU WISH!
OH, BUT I'M NOT GOING, MRS. NORTH! I WOULDN'T THINK OF LEAVING YOU ALONE!

YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT GOING?
NO! YOUR HUSBAND WON'T BE HOME TILL LATE... AND THE STORM IS SO BAD... I'LL STAY!

MRS. NORTH IS FRIGHTENED... AND AS THE EVENING HOURS WEAR ON, HER SUSPICIONS OF HILDA MULTIPLY!
HATCHET-KILLER?

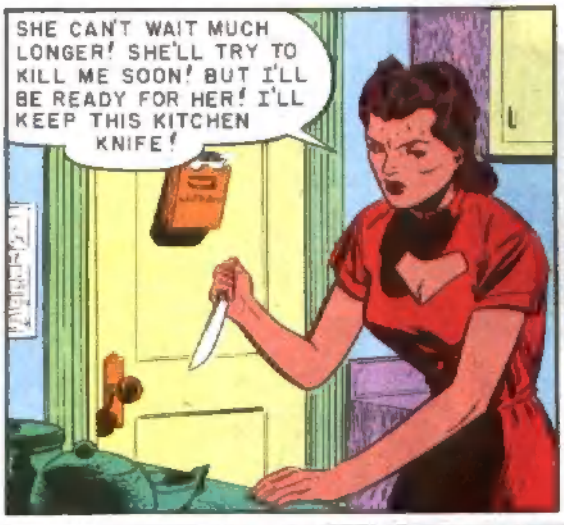
IF TOM DOESN'T COME HOME SOON, I'LL GO TO PIECES... I KNOW I WILL! HILDA WORKED FOR THE HUTCHINSONS... SHE COULD'VE WORKED FOR THE OTHERS THAT WERE...
?

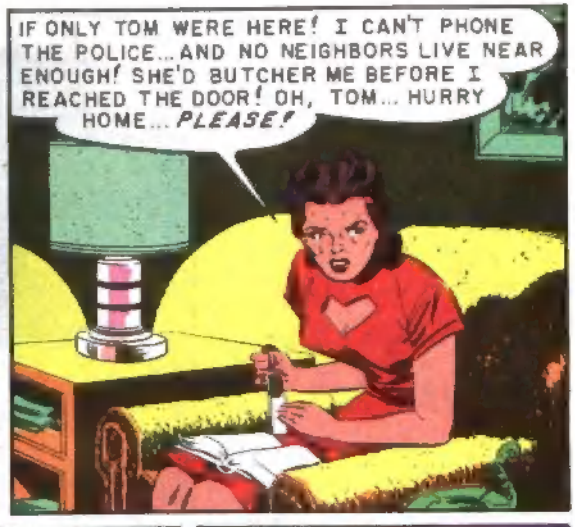
HILDA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT HATCHET?
WHY, MRS. NORTH... I WAS JUST GOING TO CHOP SOME WOOD FOR THE FIRE!

OH, LORD... LORD, HELP ME! I... I CAN'T STAND MUCH MORE OF THIS! THIS WAITING... THIS NOT KNOWING... IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY! TOM! I'LL... I'LL CALL TOM... (SOB) ASK HIM TO COME HOME!

...HELLO? HELLO, OPERATOR!... OPERATOR! WHY... THE PHONE'S DEAD!
GOOD LORD!

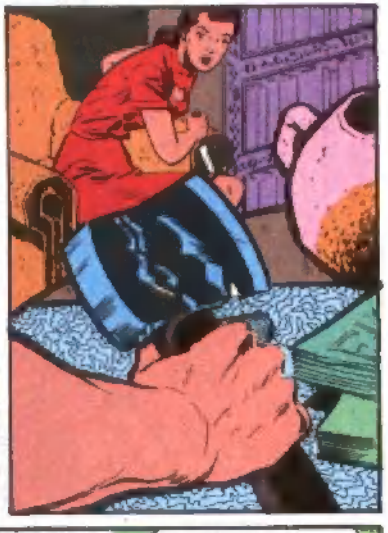
SHE MUST'VE CUT THE LINE! SHE... SHE WANTS TO KILL ME! THAT'S WHY SHE STAYED LATE TONIGHT! SHE KNEW TOM WAS WORKING LATE! HILDA'S GOING TO KILL ME! HILDA'S THE HATCHET KILLER!


SHE CAN'T WAIT MUCH LONGER! SHE'LL TRY TO KILL ME SOON! BUT I'LL BE READY FOR HER! I'LL KEEP THIS KITCHEN KNIFE!


IF ONLY TOM WERE HERE! I CAN'T PHONE THE POLICE...AND NO NEIGHBORS LIVE NEAR ENOUGH! SHE'D BUTCHER ME BEFORE I REACHED THE DOOR! OH, TOM... HURRY HOME... PLEASE!

OH... HERE SHE COMES! GOD, MAKE HER WAIT! (SOB) WHA... WHY...SHE'S LOOKING FOR SOMETHING! WHAT COULD SHE DO...
OH, MY GOD!

THE HATCHET! LYING ON THE TABLE! SHE SEES IT!...SHE'S MOVING TOWARD IT!

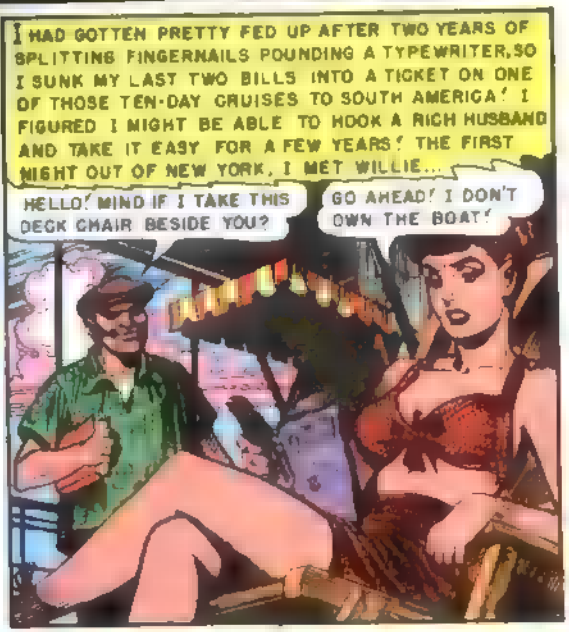


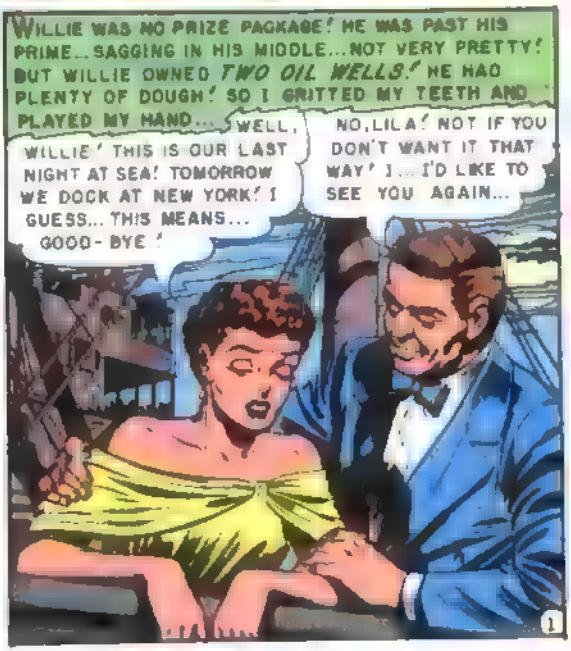
...MRS. NORTH...
STAY AWAY! STAY AWAY OR I'LL KILL YOU! DON'T COME NEAR ME!

STOP YELLING, MRS. NORTH! AND GIVE ME THAT KNIFE...YOU...
I WARN YOU! STAY AWAY FROM ME! STAY BACK!

MRS. NORTH! GIVE ME THAT... UNNGH!
I WARNED YOU TO STAY AWAY, YOU MURDERER!
HATCHET-KILLER! HATCHET-KILLER!
SHE'S DEAD! I'VE KILLED HER!
HI, HONEY! I'M HOME! TRIED TO CALL, BUT THE STORM DOWNED THE PHONE LINES... SAY...
WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE?
OH, TOM! TOM, IT WAS AWFUL! I KILLED HER! SHE TRIED TO MURDER ME!...WOULDN'T GO HOME (SOB) WANTED TO STAY SO SHE COULD KILL ME!
...SHE ACTED SO GUILTY! WORKED FOR HUTCHINSONS... WHITE SCARF... STRONG ENOUGH...SO GUILTY! ...TRIED TO KILL ME!
BUT, HONEY! I ASKED HER TO STAY WITH YOU SO YOU WOULDN'T BE ALONE!
NO! NO! NO! SHE'S GUILTY! I KNOW SHE IS! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? SHE KILLED THEM ALL! SHE'S...SHE'S THE HATCHET-KILLER!
HATCHET-KILLER? BUT THAT'S WHAT I TRIED TO PHONE YOU ABOUT.
...THE POLICE CAUGHT THE HATCHET-KILLER TWO HOURS AGO! I HEARD IT ON THE RADIO! AND THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! HE SIGNED A FULL CONFESSION! HONEY... YOU...YOU JUST MURDERED AN INNOCENT PERSON!
THE END

# REVENGE!


I HAD GOTTEN PRETTY FED UP AFTER TWO YEARS OF SPLITTING FINGERNAILS POUNDING A TYPEWRITER, SO I SUNK MY LAST TWO BILLS INTO A TICKET ON ONE OF THOSE TEN-DAY CRUISES TO SOUTH AMERICA! I FIGURED I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HOOK A RICH HUSBAND AND TAKE IT EASY FOR A FEW YEARS! THE FIRST NIGHT OUT OF NEW YORK, I MET WILLIE...
HELLO! MIND IF I TAKE THIS DECK CHAIR BESIDE YOU?
GO AHEAD! I DON'T OWN THE BOAT!


WILLIE WAS NO PRIZE PACKAGE! HE WAS PAST HIS PRIME... SAGGING IN HIS MIDDLE... NOT VERY PRETTY! BUT WILLIE OWNED TWO OIL WELLS! HE HAD PLENTY OF DOUGH! SO I GRITTED MY TEETH AND PLAYED MY HAND...
WELL, WILLIE! THIS IS OUR LAST NIGHT AT SEA! TOMORROW WE DOCK AT NEW YORK! I GUESS... THIS MEANS... GOOD-BYE!
NO, LILA! NOT IF YOU DON'T WANT IT THAT WAY! I... I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU AGAIN...

I PUT ON THE COY, WIDE-EYED GIRL ACT! IT SENT WILLIE SPINNING...

BUT... *YOU* LIVE WAY DOWN IN *TEXAS*, WILLIE! I... *I'M* A *NEW YORK GIRL!*

I'VE GOT A *BIG HOUSE*, LILA! YOU'D *LIKE* TEXAS!

IT WAS LIKE SWIPING PENCILS FROM A BLIND MAN...

ARE YOU... ASKING ME TO *MARRY YOU*, WILLIE?

YES, LILA! I... I'M *CRAZY* ABOUT YOU! *WILL* YOU?

THAT WAS ALL THERE WAS TO IT! I TURNED MY FACE UP SO HE'D KISS ME WITH HIS FAT FLABBY LIPS.

IF YOU REALLY WANT ME, WILLIE! OF COURSE.

OH, LILA... DEAREST...

I BECAME MRS. WILLIAM AIKLEY IN NEW YORK, AND WILLIE TOOK ME DOWN TO TEXAS! WILLIE HADN'T LIED! HIS HOUSE WAS JUST AS HE'D DESCRIBED IT...

WELL, LILA! THERE SHE IS!

OH, WILLIE! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

YEAH! WILLIE WAS NO PRIZE PACKAGE! BUT HE WAS WORTH A QUARTER OF A MILLION BUCKS! A GIRL CAN OVERLOOK PLENTY FOR *THAT* KIND OF DOUGH...

WILLIE! FOR *ME*? A *MINK COAT FOR ME*?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LILA!

THINGS WERE OKAY FOR THE FIRST FEW MONTHS! I GOT USED TO WILLIE! I HAD MY OWN CONVERTIBLE COUPE... CLOTHES... JEWELRY! EVERYTHING! ONE DAY... AS I WAS DRIVING HOME FROM A SHOPPING TRIP IN TOWN...

GOIN' SOUTH, MA'AM?

WHY... I... YES! HOP IN!

AS I DROVE, I STUDIED MY PASSENGER! HE WAS A YOUNG, STRAPPING HUNK OF MAN... A HANDSOME DEVIL...

HOW FAR SOUTH YOU GOIN', MA'AM?

ABOUT TEN MILES! WHERE YOU HEADED FOR, STRANGER?

PLACE DOWN THE ROAD! THE AIKLEY WELLS! GOT A JOB WAITIN'!
THE AIKLEY OIL WELLS, EH? WELL I'LL DROP YOU RIGHT THERE!

THANKS, MA'AM! THAT'S RIGHT NICE OF YOU! MY NAME'S PHIL KEENAN! WHAT'S YOURS?
LILA! LILA AIKLEY!

PHIL SHUT UP LIKE A CLAM AFTER I TOLD HIM MY NAME! I WATCHED HIM OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE AS WE DROVE ALONG! HE'D GIVE ME THE ONCE OVER EVERY FEW MINUTES...
WELL, HERE WE ARE, PHIL!
TH..THANK YOU FOR THE LIFT, MISS AIKLEY!

IT'S...MRS. AIKLEY, PHIL!
OH!

PHIL BLUSHED LIKE A KID WHEN HE LEARNED I WAS MARRIED! I GUESS I GOT A YEN FOR HIM ALMOST IMMEDIATELY! ANYWAY... I FOUND MYSELF THINKING ABOUT HIM MORE AND MORE! I WANTED TO SEE HIM AGAIN! ONE DAY, WHEN WILLIE WAS AWAY ON BUSINESS, I PHONED THE WELLS...
HELLO, CARLSON? THIS IS MRS. AIKLEY UP AT THE HOUSE! I... I'VE GOT SOME HEAVY WORK! CAN YOU SEND UP A MAN..OH, ANY ONE...ER... HOW ABOUT MR. KEENAN...YES.. PHIL KEENAN!

WHEN PHIL CAME OVER FROM THE OIL WELL, I HAD HIM PUSH SOME FURNITURE AROUND TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD, AND THEN I OFFERED HIM A DRINK...
OH, THANKS, MA'AM! I'D BETTER NOT!
C'MON, PHIL! HAVE ONE! AND FORGET THAT "MA'AM" BUSINESS! CALL ME "LILA"! WE'RE GOING TO BE FRIENDS...

I BROUGHT PHIL A STIFF ONE AND HE GULPED IT DOWN! THEN I SAT DOWN ON THE COUCH BESIDE HIM...
AREN'T WE, PHIL? WE'RE GOING TO BE GOOD FRIENDS...VERY GOOD FRIENDS...
I GOT AN IDEA YOU'RE RIGHT... LILA!

I HAD A LOT OF WORK AROUND THE HOUSE FOR PHIL AFTER THAT! EVERY TIME WILLIE WOULD GO AWAY ON A BUSINESS TRIP, I'D SEND FOR PHIL...

YOU'D BETTER CUT IT OUT, LILA! THE BOYS DOWN AT THE WELL ARE TALKIN'!

LET 'EM TALK! KISS ME...

AND AS FOR WILLIE! WILLIE BECAME MORE AND MORE OBNOXIOUS TO ME! I GREW TO DETEST HIS FEEBLE ATTEMPS TO SHOW ME AFFECTION! I WAS IN *LOVE* WITH *PHIL*...

WHAT'S WRONG, LILA? WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU LATELY? YOU TIRED OF ME?

YOU'RE SO RIGHT! *SICK* AND *TIRED* OF YOU! I'M TIRED OF BEING A BOUGHT-AND-PAID-FOR WIFE! *THROUGH*...

LILA! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!

DON'T I? LISTEN, BUSTER! I MARRIED YOU FOR YOUR MONEY... *NOTHING ELSE!* I NEVER LOVED YOU! *NEVER*...

BUT THAT NIGHT, I KICKED MYSELF FOR BLOWING UP...

*FOOL! IDIOT!* WHY DID I *TELL* HIM? *WHY?* NOW I'LL *LOSE* ALL...ALL THIS! THERE *MUST* BE A WAY! A WAY TO KEEP THE HOUSE...THE DOUGH... AND *STILL* HAVE PHIL!

AND THEN IT CAME TO ME! A PLAN! A WAY TO *GET RID* OF WILLIE...FOR *GOOD*...

WHAT'S THE IDEA, LILA? IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!

PHIL! WILLIE *KNOWS* ABOUT US! WE'VE GOT TO GET *RID OF HIM! KILL HIM!*

AT FIRST, PHIL WAS SHOCKED AT THE IDEA...BUT WITH A LITTLE "PERSUADING", I MANAGED TO CONVINCE HIM! I HAD WORKED IT ALL OUT! WILLIE WAS A MADMAN BEHIND AN AUTOMOBILE WHEEL...A *SPEED DEMON!* THAT NIGHT, PHIL FILED THE PIN OF THE STEERING ROD ON WILLIE'S CAR...

IT'S DONE!

HOW'S IT COMIN'? REMEMBER! IT'S GOT TO *SNAP* WHEN THE WHEEL IS TURNED SHARP...

IT'S ALMOST FILED THROUGH! ONE GOOD HARD TWIST WILL BUST IT...

YES! THE PLAN WAS PERFECT! WILLIE SPED TO WORK EVERY MORNING AT NINE OR SO! THAT MORNING I WAITED AT A SHARP TURN IN THE ROAD FOR HIM TO COME ALONG...

HERE HE COMES! HE MUST BE DOING SEVENTY...

WILLIE NEVER KNEW WHAT HAPPENED! AS HE CAME AROUND THE CURVE I STEPPED OUT INTO THE ROAD WAVING MY ARMS...

HE SWERVED TO AVOID ME AND THE CAR CAREENED CRAZILY ACROSS THE ROAD...

THERE WAS A SPLINTERING OF GLASS AND THE IMPACT OF TWO TONS OF STEEL AS THE CAR PLOWED INTO THE TREES LINING THE CURVE...

I BEAT IT OUT OF THERE AND GOT HOME AS QUICK AS I COULD! I WAITED AROUND THE PHONE... MOMENTARILY EXPECTING THE CALL THAT WOULD TELL ME OF WILLIE'S DEATH! THEN THE PHONE RANG! THEY'D FOUND HIM ALL RIGHT! BUT...

*HE'S STILL ALIVE?!* HOW... *HOW BADLY HURT IS HE?*

THEY TOOK WILLIE TO THE HOSPITAL! HIS SPINAL CORD HAD BEEN INJURED...

HE'S *COMPLETELY PARALYZED*, MRS. AIKLEY! IT'S A WONDER HE'S STILL ALIVE! HE CAN SEE AND HEAR... BUT HE *WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE A MUSCLE!* HE WON'T BE ABLE TO *TALK*...

I UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR!

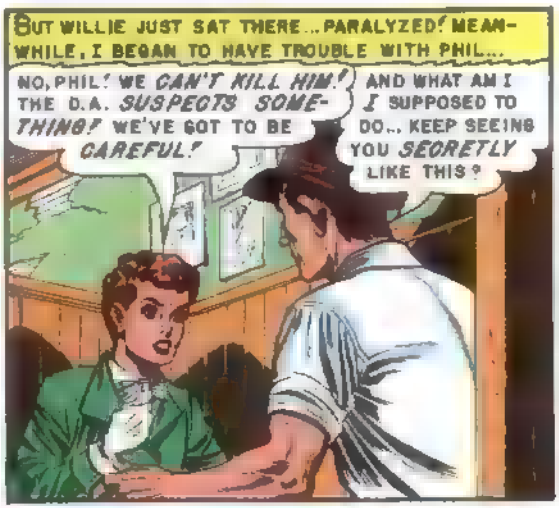
THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY PAID ME A VISIT WHILE WILLIE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL! HE ASKED ME A LOT OF QUESTIONS! HE SEEMED SUSPICIOUS... LIKE HE *KNEW*...

YOU'D BETTER BE *MIGHTY CAREFUL* FROM NOW ON, MRS. AIKLEY! I WOULDN'T WANT ANYTHING *ELSE* TO HAPPEN TO YOUR HUSBAND!

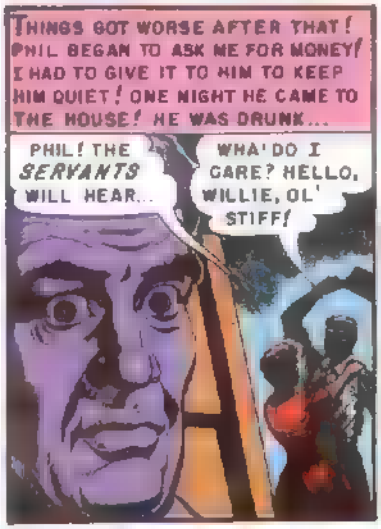
I'LL... I'LL TAKE *GOOD CARE* OF HIM, SIR!

WHEN THEY BROUGHT WILLIE HOME, HE WAS LIKE A LIVING DEAD MAN! HE WOULD SIT STIFFLY IN HIS WHEEL-CHAIR... STARING AT ME! HE COULDN'T TALK OR MOVE! IT WAS NERVE-WRACKING...

*STOP IT!* STOP *LOOKING* AT ME LIKE THAT! WHY DIDN'T YOU *DIE*... YOU HELPLESS FOOL! *WHY DIDN'T YOU DIE?*

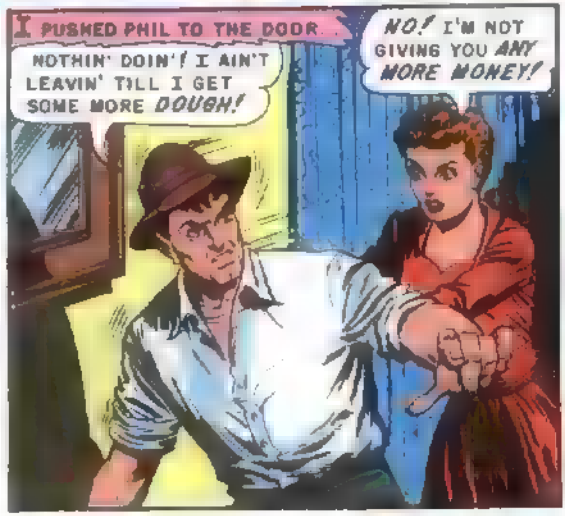

BUT WILLIE JUST SAT THERE...PARALYZED! MEANWHILE, I BEGAN TO HAVE TROUBLE WITH PHIL...
NO, PHIL! WE CAN'T KILL HIM! THE D.A. SUSPECTS SOMETHING! WE'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL!
AND WHAT AM I I SUPPOSED TO DO... KEEP SEEING YOU SECRETLY LIKE THIS?

PLEASE, PHIL! HAVE PATIENCE! I'LL WORK SOMETHING OUT!
YOU'D BETTER AND SOON...


THINGS GOT WORSE AFTER THAT! PHIL BEGAN TO ASK ME FOR MONEY! I HAD TO GIVE IT TO HIM TO KEEP HIM QUIET! ONE NIGHT HE CAME TO THE HOUSE! HE WAS DRUNK...
PHIL! THE SERVANTS WILL HEAR...
WHA' DO I CARE? HELLO, WILLIE, OL' STIFF!

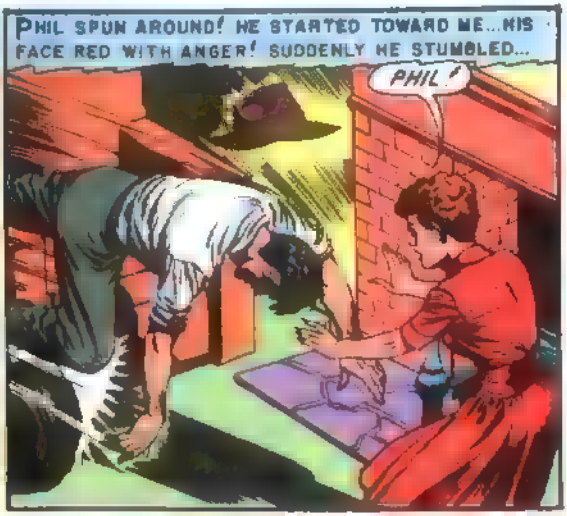
PHIL BEGAN TO TAUNT WILLY...
YOU GOT A REAL NISHE WIFE, WILLY! BUT SHE DON' LOVE YOU! KNOW WHO SHE LOVES? ME!
PHIL! STOP IT!

THEN PHIL GRABBED ME AND KISSED ME... RIGHT IN FRONT OF WILLIE... WHO JUST SAT THERE...STARING AT US.....
WHAT'D YOU THINK OF THAT, WILLY? WHY'NCHA TAKE A POKE AT ME?
GET OUT OF HERE, PHIL! YOU'RE DRUNK!


I PUSHED PHIL TO THE DOOR...
NOTHIN' DOIN'! I AIN'T LEAVIN' TILL I GET SOME MORE DOUGH!
NO! I'M NOT GIVING YOU ANY MORE MONEY!

OH? SO! YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT IF I TOLD WHAT I KNOW 'BOUT WILLY'S ACCIDENT, WOULD YOU, LILA?
GET OUT! GET OUT!

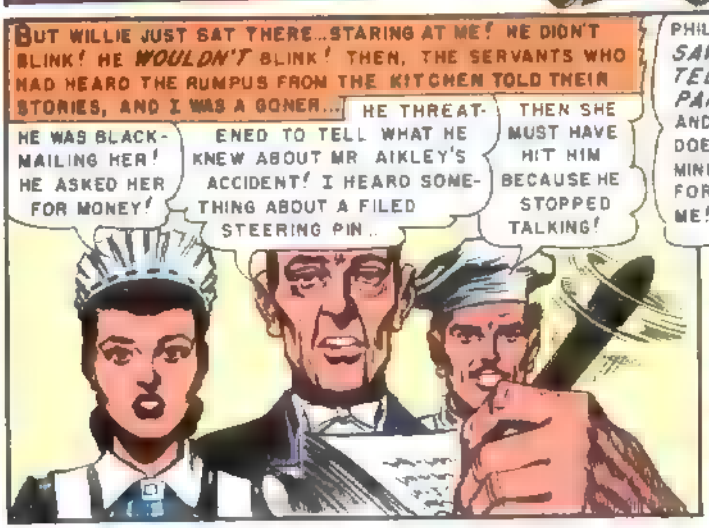
PHIL TORE AWAY FROM ME AND RAN TO WILLY! HE SHOUTED AT HIM...
YEAH, WILLY! WE DID IT! WE MADE YOU LIKE THIS! WE FILED DOWN THE STEERING ROD PIN AND..
SHUT UP, PHIL!

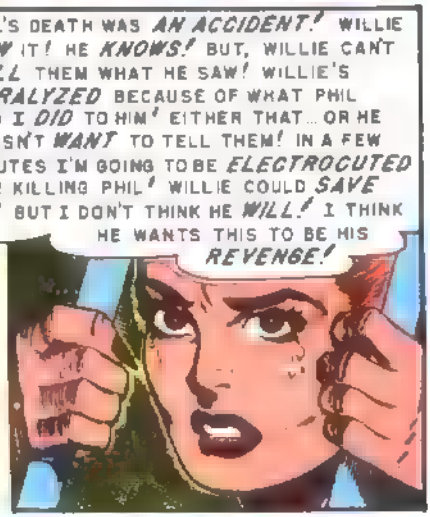

PHIL SPUN AROUND! HE STARTED TOWARD ME...HIS FACE RED WITH ANGER! SUDDENLY HE STUMBLED...
PHIL!

AS HE FELL, PHIL STRUCK HIS HEAD ON THE STONE HEARTH OF THE FIRE-PLACE! I BENT TO HELP HIM...
HE'S...HE'S DEAD!

THE POLICE CAME SOON AFTER THAT! THEY ACCUSED ME OF MURDERING PHIL...
TELL THEM, WILLIE! YOU SAW IT! TELL THEM I DIDN'T DO IT! TELL THEM IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!

BUT WILLIE COULDN'T TELL THEM! WILLIE COULDN'T TALK! HE WAS PARALYZED...
WILLIE! BLINK YOUR EYES! ONCE FOR YES... TWICE FOR NO...


BUT WILLIE JUST SAT THERE...STARING AT ME! HE DIDN'T BLINK! HE WOULDN'T BLINK! THEN, THE SERVANTS WHO HAD HEARD THE RUMPUS FROM THE KITCHEN TOLD THEIR STORIES, AND I WAS A GONER...
HE WAS BLACK-MAILING HER! HE ASKED HER FOR MONEY!
HE THREATENED TO TELL WHAT HE KNEW ABOUT MR AIKLEY'S ACCIDENT! I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT A FILED STEERING PIN..
THEN SHE MUST HAVE HIT HIM BECAUSE HE STOPPED TALKING!


PHIL'S DEATH WAS AN ACCIDENT! WILLIE SAW IT! HE KNOWS! BUT, WILLIE CAN'T TELL THEM WHAT HE SAW! WILLIE'S PARALYZED BECAUSE OF WHAT PHIL AND I DID TO HIM! EITHER THAT... OR HE DOESN'T WANT TO TELL THEM! IN A FEW MINUTES I'M GOING TO BE ELECTROCUTED FOR KILLING PHIL! WILLIE COULD SAVE ME! BUT I DON'T THINK HE WILL! I THINK HE WANTS THIS TO BE HIS REVENGE!

# CRIME TIME

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear Russ:

Well, I checked over "Backlash!" most thoroughly, and my conclusion [redacted] that the only difference between the panels are: 1) the overhead lights (if that [redacted] what they are) are in different positions; 2) one guy's tie changes from blue to red in the second panel, and the window [redacted] if that is what it [redacted] behind him changes from yellow to white; and 3) the protagonist's hairline [redacted] receding in the last panel. But the last two seem to be catagories you (wisely) disqualified, and anyway you said all three panels; so if it ain't the first I'm even more blockheaded than usual.

Do you realize I have now had letters printed in all nine titles? Whoo, I guess I better resolve not to shoot off my fool mouth so much and let someone else have a chance! (Well, mebbe jes a leetle...)

Dave Hall — Seattle, WA

**Well, well—you found a difference we missed; the overhead lights DO change! Obviously, that was due to the pastecover of the word balloons, yet it isn't different in each panel. So, the hunt [redacted] still on. Good eyes, though.**

Dear Russ,

To answer the questions of David [redacted]. Burlington [redacted] [the CRIME 5 locol]; yes, Johnny Craig wrote and later edited his lead stories for VAULT and CRIME, and the fanzine SQUA TRONT #9 lists an extensive list of writing credits for all EC titles, though some are unknown.

As to current careers of EC artists, interviews with George Evans and Bill Elder are scheduled to run in THE COMICS JOURNAL next year. Evans still draws the SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN newspaper strip which now only appears in Europe, as well as various paintings and commercial art jobs. Elder spends most of his time painting, and Jack Davis continues to do work in MAD and every magazine under the sun.

[redacted] Williamson can be found inking a variety of Marvel comics (mostly super-heroes), and a comic book scheduled to be released next year (DIMENSION X?) will feature many surviving EC artists doing story art.

In answer to David Lindsay's query about the coloring of the face on page 5, panel [redacted] of "Heads-Up!", I checked my original copy of CRIME [redacted], and the face is indeed a "lifeless pasty colour." This brings up an important point. For those of you who are EC purists, the colouring of original EC comics [redacted] far richer, more atmospheric and muted than is possible in a 1990s reprint. Printing processes are different today and it is not possible to get those kinds of tones. "Progress" in this case has changed the colours of EC comics. The colours on many covers are also different (orange for green, red for blue) on many EC box sets and cover sets. It's great [redacted] have them in poster size, but when I hold the originals next to them, THERE IS NO COMPARISON!

There is nothing, repeat NOTHING like reading an originally printed and coloured 1950s copy. Still, for those who can't afford them, reprints are an incredible simulation.

In answer to Scott Dooley, concerning Picto-Fiction, since you are such a Johnny Craig fan, you'll be pleased to note that the EC black and white mags you speak [redacted] contain Craig's BEST work ever! Wash, charcoal and incredible detail, especially in TERROR ILLUSTRATED #1. Beware, though, that most of the stories are re-done from old New Trend ECs but with new art, sometimes by different artists than their previous incarnation.

Paul Wardle — Toronto, ON

**Major differences between 50s comics' color and our current reprints: Finer screens (smaller dots), whiter paper, more brilliant inks and better registration (the ink lands where intended more often). In addition, in these offset-printed comics the black lines don't spread out due to a letterpress plate's wear and tear under repeated pressure, and finer lines are less likely to simply disappear.**

Dear Russ,

I think that the "Tales from the Crypt-Keeper" cartoon series is very unfaithful to the EC comics. I was ready to accept the cut-rate animation but the stories were changed so much as [redacted] be unrecognizable. I knew they couldn't be totally faithful being that it's a Saturday morning cartoon but this was unacceptable. The HBO series, though not 100% faithful, was considerably better than this. And, good news for us EC fans without cable, the HBO series is coming to FOX (in edited form, no doubt).

How many issues did Graham Ingels contribute to CRIME? SHOCK? Did Harvey Kurtzman contribute to CRIME?

Tracy Craine — Coneyville, KY

**We had Dr. deRange of EC's SF titles fire up the CRAYFISH OUGHT-TWO computer, and he came up with this data: Ingels did 15 stories [redacted] CRIME and 3 in SHOCK; Kurtzman did 2 stories for CRIME.**

**NEXT ISSUE**

BIT BY BIT THE GAP BETWEEN THEM CLOSES! IN A LAST FRANTIC ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE, THE HUNTED DARTS INTO AN ALLEY...

Dear Mr. Cochran,

On a cold and windy night I've just read CRIME #6 and was engrossed throughout the entire issue, which was a very good read indeed. CRIME makes a lot of today's trendy comics look namby-pamby by comparison. I liked all four strips in this issue. Great stuff.

How elegant and ladylike that character Sherry is in "A Toast...to Death!", drawn by Johnny Craig. Would I sound like a teenage delinquent if I told you that I was laughing at the sight of the copy of MURDER STORIES next to Alphonse's somewhat overweight dead body? Don't worry—reading CRIME won't make me vandalise any phone boxes. I like the way Johnny Craig draws women. Sherry looks like a bored housewife. She isn't a glamour girl. She's almost a "plain Jane" (please forgive this chauvinistic euphemism). She looks real to me, like a real woman in the real world. I love the expression on her face in the last panel of this strip. That smile says a lot. What she says to the reader as she awaits the gas chamber has powerful dramatic impact and black humour: "Do you know what kind of gas they use? Cyanide! That's the same stuff that I used to kill Alphonse! Isn't that a laugh?"

I'd be out of my mind if I missed an issue of CRIME and "Out of my Mind!", drawn by Jack Kamen, is another excellent strip. I didn't expect Harvey to know that Betty Andrews was faking it. I felt the impact of this strip's seemingly (to me) cruel conclusion right there in my guts. A lady lawyer I met recently tells me that people try to get off with various mischiefs and misdemeanours by pleading insane and I understand (from reading non-fiction and watching TV documentaries) that the US courts regularly have problems with people faking paranoid schizophrenia and multiple personality. I like the panel in "Out of my Mind" in which Betty is lying trussed up in a straight-jacket laughing away and thinking "what a silly way to make a million bucks!"

"The Switch" is another good one. This is a very clever strip, with an ingenious plot. George Roussos' comics work on this one is strong, bold and clear. Everything looks really solid. Excellent work. I recently read a DC comic drawn by George featuring Green Arrow and Manhunter from Mars (in BRAVE AND BOLD #50, Nov 63) which is one of my favorite comics of all time, a comic which really means a lot to me. On comparing this and "The Switch" I can see they were drawn by the same guy. He changed his style in the sixties. I know that George still works in comics as the colorist for CAPTAIN AMERICA. His 50s work on "The Switch" is first class.

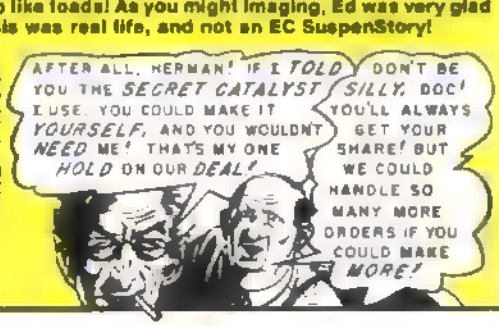
"Jury Duty!" drawn by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels is another clever strip with an ingenious story built around legal points. Ingels' work has its usual distinctive excellence.

CRIME is, in my opinion, one of the best reads in comics today. These strips from the 50s stand head and shoulders above the dross and fluff. Thanks for another intriguing issue.

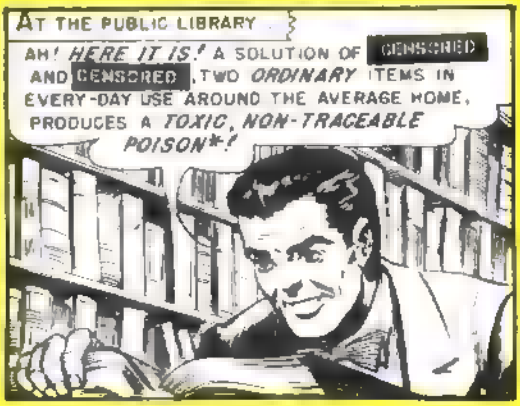
John Miller — Edinburgh, SCOTLAND

**Your anonymous editor once worked at a place where, if you weren't careful, you could accidentally make cyanide gas while closeted in a tiny workroom. They made you practice a routine of holding your breath, alerting the others with hand signals and evacuating. Sure enough, one day the door opened and employees came out quickstep, our faces puffed up like toads! As you might imaging, Ed was very glad this was real life, and not an EC SuspenStory!**

NEXT ISSUE




## NEXT ISSUE




### WOW, FOLKS, LOOK AT THIS!

**In the 70s, East Coast Comix reprinted 12 EC comics in facsimile form. Certain issues have been harder to get for years now. We have found an EXTREMELY LIMITED quantity of their 3rd thru 10th issues. In addition, issues 11 and 12 are listed here at the same price currently on our mail order form.**

**We particularly recommend #9, that issue of TWO-FISTED TALES is one of the greatest individual comic books of all time!**

**When ordering please identify as EAST COAST ISSUE # (for example, EAST COAST #3). Add $5. per order S&H ($10. outside US).**

**#3 (SHOCK #12)**
**#4 (HAUNT #12)**
**#5 (WEIRD FANTASY #13)**
**#6 (CRIME #25)**
**#7 (VAULT #26)**
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**The above are $15. each.**

**#11 (WEIRD SCIENCE "#12") (#1)**
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**This month: HAUNT #7 and WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY #7. Next month: The 8th issues of CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Don't forget VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!**

**BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, $3 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, $1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, $2 each. Add $5 per order ($10 outside US) for S&H.**

**We want MORE letters! Write to:**
**CRIME**
**RUSS COCHRAN**
**POB 469**
**WEST PLAINS MO 65775**

**THIS COMIC REPRINTS**
**CRIME SUSPENSTORIES #7 (OCT/NOV 1951)**

COVER by Johnny Craig
"Hatchet-Killer!" — Johnny Craig
"Revenge!" — Jack Kamen
"Phonies" — Jack Davis
"Horror Under the Big-Top" — Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you want them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the individual letter.

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF

# FINE ARTS #15

**I call this header drawing "Why GhouLunatics Get Grey"! Yes, the old Vault-Keeper really made his mark that day...BOOKMARK, that is, as I clamped that weighty tome athwart his traguses! Or is that tragi? Small matter, I don't even know what a tragus is!! And here's a few words from the artist: —CK**

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I hope you like this "fine art". That Vault-Keeper, always the practical joker! Needless to say, that one brought him closer to a second death!

Once again, if I have the good fortune to be published, please print my address.

George Hopper
1053 N College
Fresno CA 93728

COMEDY

TRAGEDY

**THE SPIRITS of dramaturgy, EC-style; from the stylish stylus of Walter Pearson Rutland, VT. —CK**

**THE TRADITION**

Gaines was emperor of the EC empire
Feldstein his loyal and indispensable sire

Wood rendered spaceships with consummate skill
Davis gave readers a shudder and chill

Feldstein covers brought gasps of awe
Craig penciled panels with scarcely a flaw

Kurtzman drew caricatures with a wink and a smile
Ingels' dark visions were ghastly and vile

Kamen was a journeyman well worth his salt
Wertham brought it all to an untimely halt

Gaines is no more but left Russ his mission
Cochran carries on the grand EC tradition.

Timothy M. Walters
Muskogee, OK

**Berg and Check and Colan and Crandall,**
**Fritz and Williamson and Roy the Kronkal,**

**Elkins and Estrada and Evans and Toth,**
**Elder and Severin, the each and the both,**

**Harrison and Heath and Krigstein and Torres,**
**Larson and Oleson (those Swede EC boys),**

**Roussos and Kubert and Peters (a pseudonym!)**
**Rate high with the fans and GhouLoots who know them! —CK**

**THE PET**

I bought my pet in a store lit black
That wasn't there when I looked back.
All went well for about a day
Until my pet began to play.
First, he ate the garbage can.
And then he at the garbage man.
My mom, she said he had to go
When he gnawed off my dad's big toe!!

I though you could use my poem in your book—and if you don't, shoot it with a silver bullet!

PS! This was true!

Daniel Bale
Middleton, ID

**And who said it wasn't? —CK**

Dear VK, CK and OW,

It's me again, Stephen McLellan. I just got VAULT #8 with my other letter. Now, I will tell you a story (I made it up) "The Shadow" is [redacted] name.

**THE SHADOW**

My story begins one night when a man was walking along a dark sidewalk. He saw something that looked like a person. Then he saw it a second and third time. He thought he was being followed so he ran the rest of the way home. When he got home he locked the door. Then, he ran up to his bedroom and locked that door but the thing walked right through the door! He then saw it was a shadow!

The shadow grabbed the man's shadow's neck. The man used his shadow to punch the shadow. The man went downstairs, got his gun and shot the shadow with the shadow of the bullet.

How did you like it? By the way, how come CK has a show, but not VK or OW?

Stephen McLellan
Davidson, MD

**Talent. —CK**

**Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:**

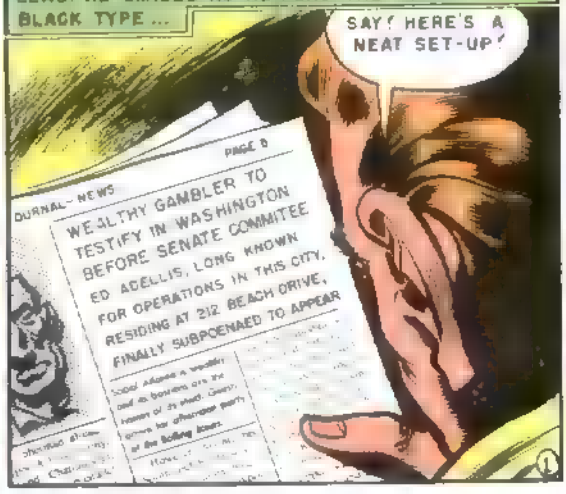
**THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S**
**PAGE OF FINE ARTS**
**RUSS COCHRAN**
**POB 469**
**WEST PLAINS MO 65775**

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise to return, acknowledge or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, accuracy and size. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication, to do so we need your address on the individual contribution.

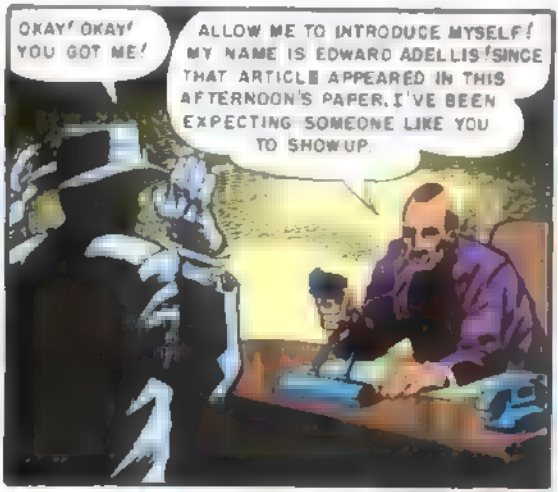
# PHONIES

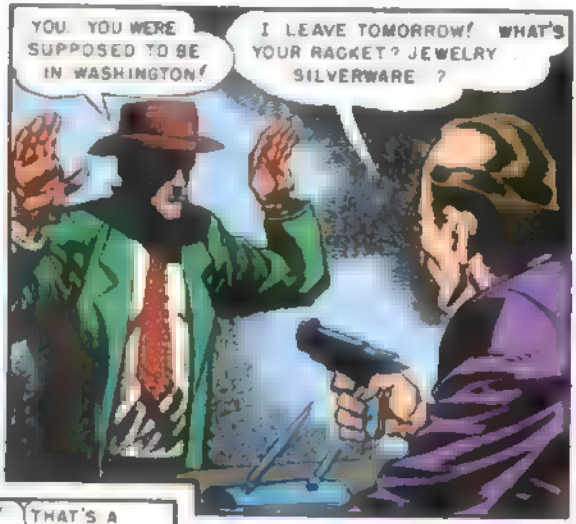
FRANK SHANTLY SAT DEJECTEDLY IN HIS SHABBY HOTEL ROOM IDLY THUMBING THROUGH THE AFTERNOON NEWSPAPER! THE 'TAKE' FROM HIS LAST SAFE-CRACKING JOB HAD JUST ABOUT RUN OUT! HIS ANXIOUS GLANCE SKIPPED FROM HEADLINE TO HEADLINE ...

SUDDENLY FRANK'S EYES FELL UPON A COLUMN LEAD! HE SMILED AS HE READ THE SMALL BLACK TYPE ...



THIS GUY ADELLIS HAS PROBABLY GOT PLENTY OF CASH STASHED AWAY IN HIS SAFE! WITH HIM OUT OF TOWN... IT'LL BE A CINCH!
YEAH! TONIGHT I'LL MOSEY UP TO 212 BEACH DRIVE AND HELP MYSELF!
AND SO... LATE THAT NIGHT... A SHADOWY FIGURE MOVED SILENTLY ACROSS THE LAWN OF ED ADELLIS' LUXURIOUS HOME...
PLACE IS DARK! LOOKS LIKE NOBODY'S HERE...
FRANK SHANTLY CAUTIOUSLY SLIPPED AROUND TO THE REAR OF THE LARGE HOUSE! FROM HIS POCKET, HE DREW A SMALL PAIR OF WIRE CUTTERS AND A RUBBER GLOVE! CAREFULLY HE CLIMBED THE ELECTRIC POLE THAT SUPPLIED THE ADELLIS-HOUSE WITH CURRENT...
THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF ANY ALARM SYSTEMS HE MAY HAVE HOOKED UP...
THEN HE CROSSED THE FLAGSTONE TERRACE TO THE FRENCH DOORS! WITH A GLAZER'S TOOL, FRANK BENT AND CAREFULLY REMOVED THE PANE OF GLASS ADJACENT TO THE DOOR LOCK...
THESE FRENCH DOORS ALWAYS UNLOCK FROM THE INSIDE!
WITH THE GLASS REMOVED, THE SAFE-CRACKER EASILY REACHED INSIDE AND RELEASED THE LOCK! THEN HE SWUNG THE DOOR OPEN AND STEPPED IN...
HMMM! LOOKS LIKE THE LIBRARY! THE SAFE COULD BE IN THIS ROOM...
SLOWLY THE WHITE CIRCLE OF LIGHT FROM FRANK'S FLASH SLID OVER THE FURNITURE AND WALLS... SEARCHING FOR A LIKELY PLACE THAT MIGHT CONCEAL A SAFE! SUDDENLY...
WHAT THE...
GOOD EVENING! AS YOU CAN SEE, I AM POINTING A GUN AT YOU, SO DON'T TRY ANYTHING...

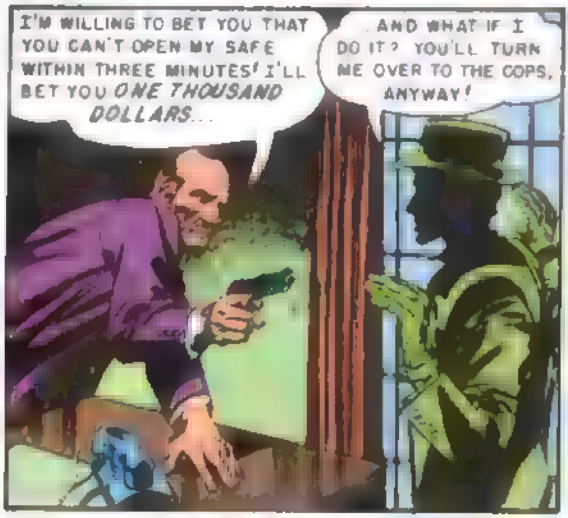

OKAY! OKAY! YOU GOT ME!
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! MY NAME IS EDWARD ADELLIS! SINCE THAT ARTICLE APPEARED IN THIS AFTERNOON'S PAPER, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING SOMEONE LIKE YOU TO SHOW UP.


YOU... YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE IN WASHINGTON!
I LEAVE TOMORROW! WHAT'S YOUR RACKET? JEWELRY... SILVERWARE ?

SAFES!
OH? HAH! THEN I'VE SAVED YOU A LOT OF TROUBLE! YOU COULDN'T HAVE OPENED MINE!

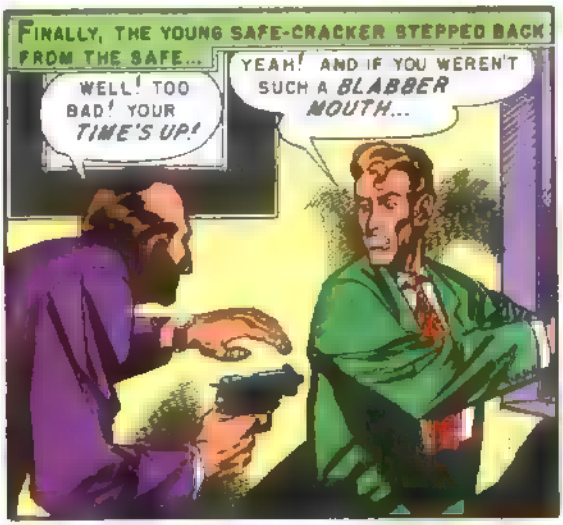
NO? I'LL OPEN ANY SAFE MADE! AND WITHIN THREE MINUTES...TOO!
THAT'S A RATHER WILD BOAST, SONNY BOY!

CUT OUT THE TALK, ADELLIS! WHY DON'T YOU PHONE THE COPS ?
I'M A GAMBLER, KID! I'M KNOWN FOR IT! NOW... I'VE GOT A PROPOSITION


I'M WILLING TO BET YOU THAT YOU CAN'T OPEN MY SAFE WITHIN THREE MINUTES! I'LL BET YOU ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS...
AND WHAT IF I DO IT? YOU'LL TURN ME OVER TO THE COPS, ANYWAY!

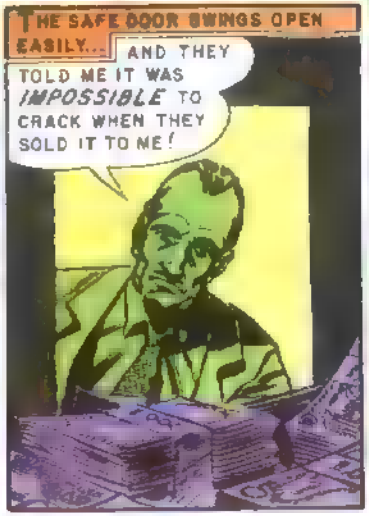
ALL RIGHT! ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND YOUR FREEDOM!
ADELLIS, YOU GOT A BET! LEAD ME TO 'ER!

THE OLDER ADELLIS LED THE YOUNG SAFE-CRACKER TO A LARGE PAINTING.
'SHE', YOU CALL IT, BEHIND THAT PICTURE!
OKAY! START TIMING!
THE OLDER MAN NOTED HIS WATCH AND THEN SIGNALED THE YOUNGER ONE TO START...
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I KEEP YOU COVERED! I'D RATHER NOT TAKE CHANCES!
HUH! SOME GAMBLER! AW! THIS ONE'S EASY!
THE YOUNG SAFE-CRACKER DREW A SMALL SHEET OF SANDPAPER FROM HIS POCKET AND BEGAN TO SANDPAPER HIS FINGER-TIPS...
THIRTY SECONDS! WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE DOING?
SANDING MY FINGERS! MAKES 'EM MORE SENSITIVE!
ONE MINUTE! TWO TO GO! WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING FOR?
THE TUMBLERS FALLING INTO PLACE! CUT THE GAB, EH?
MINUTE AND A HALF! YOU'RE RATHER YOUNG FOR THIS KIND OF THING, AREN'T YOU?
I LEARN FAST! LOOK! SHUT UP, HUH? I'LL MISS A CLICK...
TWO MINUTES! ONE TO GO! I'LL BET YOU'D MAKE OUT WELL IN SOME LEGITIMATE BUSINESS! YOU SEEM TO HAVE A GOOD MECHANICAL APTITUDE! WHY DON'T YOU THINK IT OVER?
I LIKE MY RACKET! YOU MEET SUCH NICE QUIET SAFES!
UMPH! SQUELCHED! I'LL KEEP QUIET! OH! YOU HAVE THIRTY SECONDS ..
THANKS!

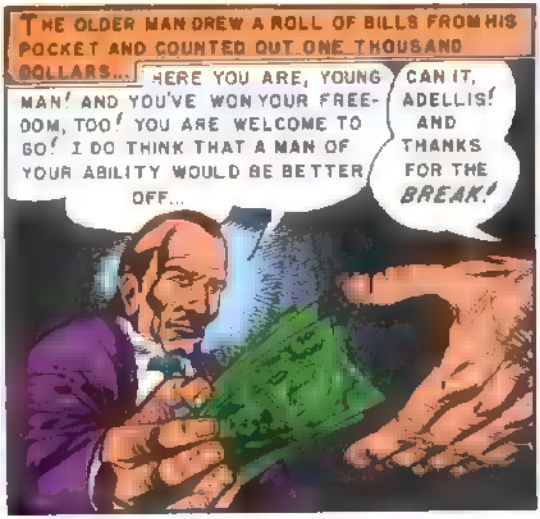

FINALLY, THE YOUNG SAFE-CRACKER STEPPED BACK FROM THE SAFE...
WELL! TOO BAD! YOUR TIME'S UP!
YEAH! AND IF YOU WEREN'T SUCH A BLABBER MOUTH...

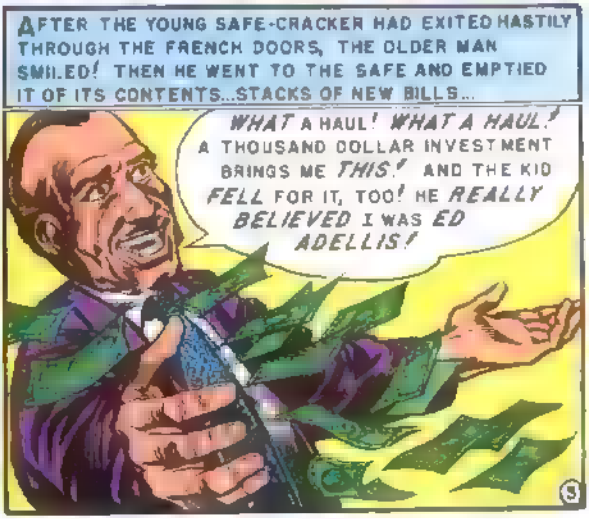
...I'D 've HAD IT OPEN A LOT SOONER!
YOU MEAN IT IS OPEN?

SEE FOR YOURSELF!
WELL, I'LL BE!


THE SAFE DOOR SWINGS OPEN EASILY...
AND THEY TOLD ME IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CRACK WHEN THEY SOLD IT TO ME!

OKAY, ADELLIS! I WON THE BET! WHERE'S THE DOUGH?
YES! YOU WON! YOU WON! HERE YOU ARE


THE OLDER MAN DREW A ROLL OF BILLS FROM HIS POCKET AND COUNTED OUT ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS...
HERE YOU ARE, YOUNG MAN! AND YOU'VE WON YOUR FREEDOM, TOO! YOU ARE WELCOME TO GO! I DO THINK THAT A MAN OF YOUR ABILITY WOULD BE BETTER OFF...
CAN IT, ADELLIS! AND THANKS FOR THE BREAK!

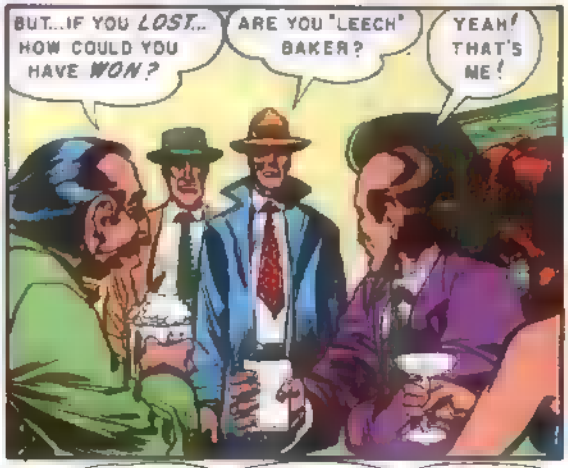

AFTER THE YOUNG SAFE-CRACKER HAD EXITED HASTILY THROUGH THE FRENCH DOORS, THE OLDER MAN SMILED! THEN HE WENT TO THE SAFE AND EMPTIED IT OF ITS CONTENTS...STACKS OF NEW BILLS...
WHAT A HAUL! WHAT A HAUL! A THOUSAND DOLLAR INVESTMENT BRINGS ME THIS! AND THE KID FELL FOR IT, TOO! HE REALLY BELIEVED I WAS ED ADELLIS!

THE OLDER MAN POCKETED THE PACKETS OF BILLS AND CLOSED THE SAFE...
I KNEW THAT ARTICLE WOULD BRING SOME THIEF BESIDE ME...

THEN PUT ON HIS HAT AND COAT...
SOMEDAY I'LL HAVE SOMEONE TEACH ME TO CRACK MY OWN SAFES! THEN I CAN DO MY OWN DIRTY WORK...

...CLOSED THE FRENCH DOORS AS HE LEFT...
IT'S NOTHING BUT HIGH LIVING FOR "LEECH" BAKER... FROM NOW TILL THE DOUGH RUNS OUT!

YES! THAT'S WHAT IT WAS! HIGH LIVING! NIGHT-CLUBS...LIQUOR...WOMEN...AND THEN, ONE NIGHT...
HEY, "LEECH"! WHERE'D YOU GET THE BANKROLL YOU'VE BEEN UNLOADING THIS PAST WEEK?
BETTIN'! I...I MADE A BET! LOST ONE GRAND, TOO!


BUT...IF YOU LOST... HOW COULD YOU HAVE WON?
ARE YOU "LEECH" BAKER?
YEAH! THAT'S ME!

YOU'D BETTER COME ALONG WITH US, BAKER! WE'RE FROM THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT!
T-MEN!
YES, BAKER! YOU'VE BEEN PASSING TOO MUCH OF THAT COUNTERFEIT MONEY, RECENTLY!

COUNTER-FEIT DOUGH!
C'MON, BAKER! DON'T ACT SO INNOCENT!
FUNNY THING! WE WERE WORKING ON THIS ADELLIS GUY! WE THOUGHT HE WAS OUR BOY!
THE END

# THE HAUNT OF FEAR

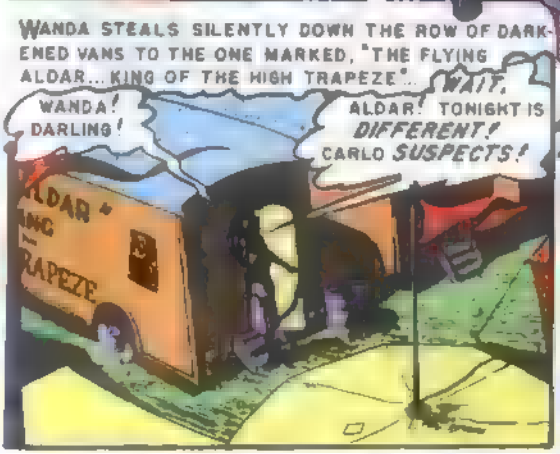
HEE, HEE! GREETINGS AGAIN, KIDDIES! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO *THE HAUNT OF FEAR!* I AM *THE OLD WITCH*... YOUR HOSTESS IN *HORROR!* WELL, MY CAULDRON IS BUBBLING AND STEAMING... SO COME IN AND I'LL DISH OUT ANOTHER *TASTY TERROR-TALE* FOR YOU TO SWALLOW! I CALL THIS CHARMING YARN...

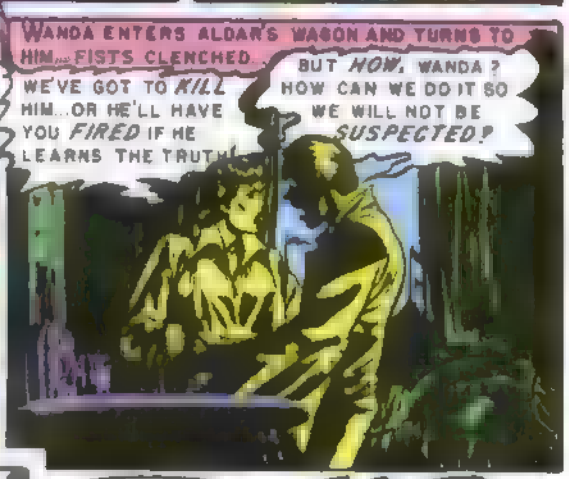
## HORROR UNDER THE BIG-TOP!

BAH! YOU THINK I'M BLIND? YOU THINK I DON'T SEE WHAT GOES ON BETWEEN YOU AND THAT TRAPEZE MONKEY...
CARLO! YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A CHILD! NOW GO TO SLEEP...

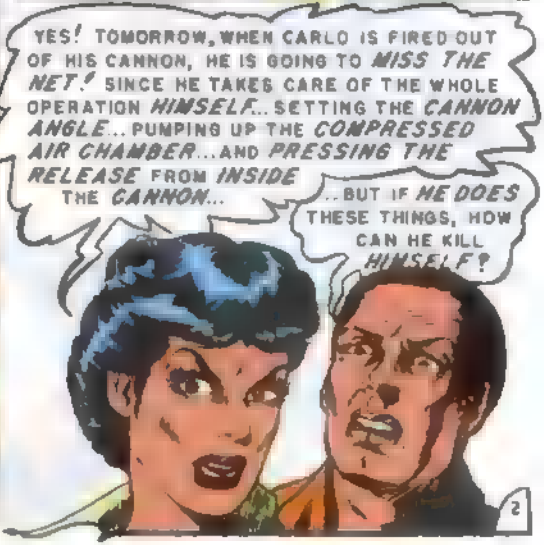
SOON CARLO'S HEAVY, REGULAR BREATHING TELLS WANDA...HIS WIFE...THAT HE IS SLEEPING...
I MUST GO TO ALDAR! CARLO SUSPECTS! WE'LL HAVE TO ACT SOONER THAN WE PLANNED!

WANDA DRESSES QUICKLY AND EXITS FROM HER PORTABLE HOME! ON THE SIDE OF THE VAN IS PAINTED THE WORDS, "CARLO... THE HUMAN CANNON BALL..."
WE'LL HAVE TO DO IT, TONIGHT!


WANDA STEALS SILENTLY DOWN THE ROW OF DARKENED VANS TO THE ONE MARKED, "THE FLYING ALDAR...KING OF THE HIGH TRAPEZE"...
WANDA! DARLING!
WAIT, ALDAR! TONIGHT IS DIFFERENT! CARLO SUSPECTS!


WANDA ENTERS ALDAR'S WAGON AND TURNS TO HIM...FISTS CLENCHED...
WE'VE GOT TO KILL HIM...OR HE'LL HAVE YOU FIRED IF HE LEARNS THE TRUTH!
BUT HOW, WANDA? HOW CAN WE DO IT SO WE WILL NOT BE SUSPECTED?

I HAVE PLANNED IT ALL CAREFULLY! YOU WILL BE HIGH ON YOUR TRAPEZE PLATFORM WHEN THE ACCIDENT HAPPENS! I WILL BE OUT ON THE MIDWAY DOING MY USUAL COME-ON ACT! CARLO WILL KILL HIMSELF...
KILL HIMSELF?

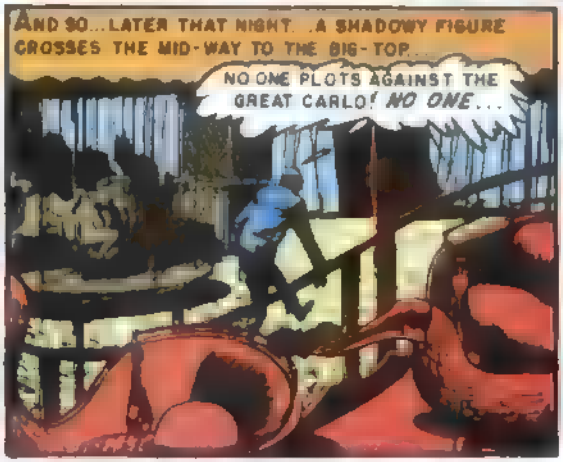

YES! TOMORROW, WHEN CARLO IS FIRED OUT OF HIS CANNON, HE IS GOING TO MISS THE NET! SINCE HE TAKES CARE OF THE WHOLE OPERATION HIMSELF...SETTING THE CANNON ANGLE...PUMPING UP THE COMPRESSED AIR CHAMBER...AND PRESSING THE RELEASE FROM INSIDE THE CANNON...
...BUT IF HE DOES THESE THINGS, HOW CAN HE KILL HIMSELF?

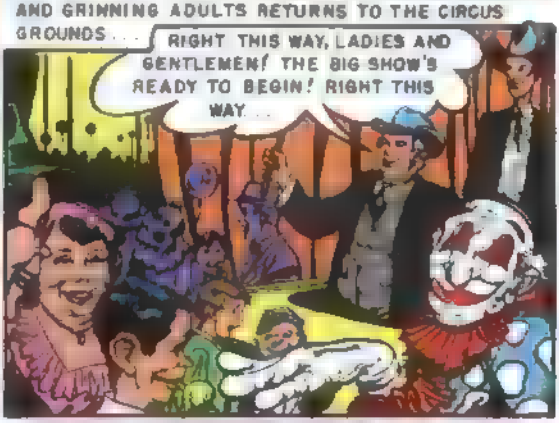
WANDA MOTIONS ALDAR TO FOLLOW HER AND THEY LEAVE THE VAN...SLIPPING SILENTLY ACROSS THE GROUNDS TO THE BIG TOP...
THERE IS THE CANNON! NOW I WILL SHOW YOU!
EVERYONE THINKS THAT CARLO IS "FIRED" FROM THIS CANNON BY AN EXPLOSIVE! THIS IS NOT TRUE! THE NOISE...THE SMOKE AND FLAME...IS JUST AN EFFECT...A SMALL BOMB! CARLO IS ACTUALLY CATAPULTED BY A HOLLOW PISTON INSIDE THE CANNON WHICH IS THROWN FORWARD BY COMPRESSED AIR...
OH! I SEE!
THE ANGLE OF THE CANNON IS SET BY CARLO...ABOUT FORTY-EIGHT DEGREES! SO IS THE COMPRESSED AIR...ABOUT TWO HUNDRED POUNDS PER SQUARE FOOT! THIS MUST BE EXACTLY RIGHT FOR HIM TO HIT THAT NET!
BUT...IF THE ANGLE WAS CHANGED...AND MORE AIR WAS USED HE'D OVERSHOOT THE NET! TRAVELING AT ABOUT TWO HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR... HE'D BE A PRETTY MESS!
THEN, WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IS TAMPER WITH THE GAUGES...
YES! WE'LL ADJUST THE ANGLE INDICATOR TO SHOW LESS THAN IT REALLY IS... AND THE SAME WITH THE COMPRESSED AIR GAUGE...
SOON THE DIRTY WORK IS DONE! THE GAUGES ARE FIXED SO THAT POOR CARLO WILL OVERSHOOT THE NET! THEN...
NOW, I MUST GO BACK! AND AFTER TOMORROW'S PERFORMANCE, WE'LL BE RID OF HIM!
I HOPE CARLO DOESN'T DISCOVER WHAT WE HAVE DONE, WANDA!
WHEN WANDA RETURNS TO HER VAN
WHERE WERE YOU?

I...I WENT FOR A WALK! I COULDN'T SLEEP!
YOU LIE! YOU WENT TO SEE HIM!

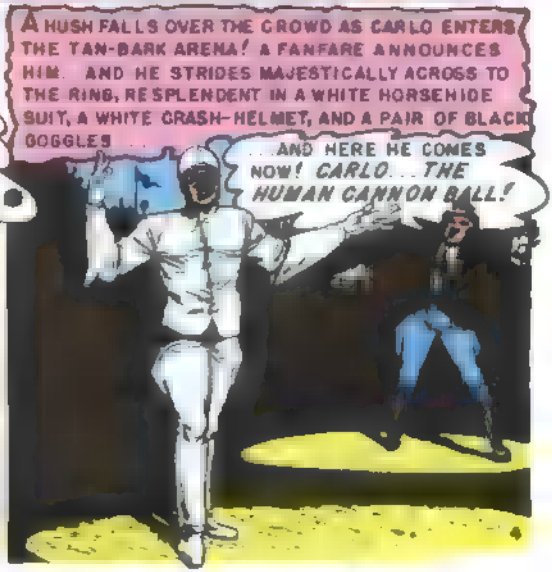
NO! I WAS WALKING, I TELL YOU!
AND YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU? DO YOU THINK I'M A FOOL?

BELIEVE WHAT YOU LIKE! I'M GOING TO BED! GOOD-NIGHT!
GOOD-NIGHT!
CARLO


AND SO...LATER THAT NIGHT...A SHADOWY FIGURE CROSSES THE MID-WAY TO THE BIG-TOP...
NO ONE PLOTS AGAINST THE GREAT CARLO! NO ONE...


THE NEXT DAY THE MULTITUDE OF LAUGHING CHILDREN AND GRINNING ADULTS RETURNS TO THE CIRCUS GROUNDS...
RIGHT THIS WAY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE BIG SHOW'S READY TO BEGIN! RIGHT THIS WAY...

THE SHOW UNDER THE BIG-TOP IS A LAVISH AFFAIR! CLOWNS...ANIMAL ACTS...WILD ANIMAL TRAINERS... JUGGLERS...ACROBATS...THE WHOLE WORKS! THEN THE TIME ARRIVES FOR THE BIG ATTRACTION...
...AND NOW...LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... I AM PROUD TO PRESENT THE GREATEST ACT OF ITS KIND ANYWHERE! THE GREAT CARLO...THE HUMAN CANNONBALL...


A HUSH FALLS OVER THE CROWD AS CARLO ENTERS THE TAN-BARK ARENA! A FANFARE ANNOUNCES HIM...AND HE STRIDES MAJESTICALLY ACROSS TO THE RING, RESPLENDENT IN A WHITE HORSEHIDE SUIT, A WHITE CRASH-HELMET, AND A PAIR OF BLACK GOGGLES...
...AND HERE HE COMES NOW! CARLO...THE HUMAN CANNON BALL!

CARLO APPROACHES THE HUGE CANNON MOUNTED ON THE GLEAMING TRUCK! HE TURNS AND BOWS TO THE AUDIENCE...

...AND NOW CARLO WILL *RAISE THE CANNON* TO THE *EXACT ANGLE NECESSARY* SO THAT WHEN HE IS *SHOT* FROM ITS MOUTH HE WILL *HIT THE NET* ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ARENA...

CARLO BUSYS HIMSELF AT THE CONTROL PANEL ON THE SIDE OF THE TRUCK! A MOTOR STARTS AND THE CANNON BEGINS TO RAISE ITS BLUNT MUZZLE...AT THE SAME TIME THE COMPRESSED AIR TANK BEGINS TO FILL...

...REMEMBER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... A *SINGLE DEGREE OF ERROR MEANS CERTAIN DEATH...*

CARLO STUDIES THE GAUGES BEFORE HIM! WHEN THE ANGLE READS FORTY-EIGHT DEGRESS. HE STOPS THE CANNON! WHEN THE AIR PRESSURE GAUGE READS TWO HUNDRED POUNDS...HE SHUTS OFF THE COMPRESSOR...

EVERYTHING IS READY! NOW, CARLO WILL ENTER THE CANNON!

CARLO CLIMBS TO THE ROOF OF THE TRUCK CAB AND LIFTS HIMSELF INTO THE CANNON'S MOUTH, FEET FIRST! HE SMILES AND WAVES TO THE AUDIENCE BEFORE LETTING HIMSELF SLIDE INSIDE...

THERE HE GOES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! *GOOD LUCK, CARLO!*

A HUSH FALLS OVER THE CROWD...

WHEN THE GREAT CARLO FEELS THAT HE IS READY, HE WILL PRESS THE FIRING BUTTON INSIDE THE CANNON...

HIGH UP OVER THE ARENA, ON HIS TRAPEZE PLATFORM WAITING TO GO ON, THE FLYING ALDAR WATCHES THE PROCEEDINGS...

WATCH THE MOUTH OF THE CANNON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

WHILE OUTSIDE THE BIG-TOP, ON THE DESERTED MID-WAY, WANDA STANDS ON HER PLATFORM... LISTENING...

IN A FEW SECONDS, CARLO WILL FIRE THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE THAT WILL SEND HIM HURTLING THROUGH THE AIR AT TWO HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR

THERE IS A MOMENT OF SILENCE... AND THEN...
BLAMMM!
CARLO...THE HUMAN CANNONBALL STREAKS FROM THE CANNON...TURNING LIMPLY IN MID-AIR! THOUSANDS OF PAIRS OF EYES FOLLOW THE HURTLING FIGURE...
SOMEONE SCREAMS! THEN ANOTHER! CARLO IS TRAVELING TOO HIGH AND TOO FAST...
HE'LL MISS THE NET!
HE'LL BE KILLED!
AS THE SHRIEKING CROWD WATCHES...CARLO'S SPEEDING FORM PLUNGES THROUGH THE TENT ROOF...TEARING A GREAT HOLE AS IT RIPS OUT INTO SPACE...
YAA-A-A-A-A
OH, MY LORD!
GOOD GOD!
HIGH UP ON HIS TRAPEZE PERCH, A...DAR SMILES GRIMLY...
THEY'LL PROBABLY FIND... WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU...ON THE MID-WAY...
AND ON THE MID-WAY OUTSIDE, A CROWD GATHERS AROUND THE GORY SIGHT...
O HOW HORRIBLE!
HE CAME RIGHT THROUGH THE TENT! THEY WERE KILLED INSTANTLY!
YES, KIDDIES! THEY WERE KILLED! CARLO'S SPEEDING BODY HAD BROKEN THROUGH THE TENT AND STRUCK WANDA...
THAT...THAT'S HIS WIFE!
WHAT A HORRIBLE TRICK OF FATE...

HEE, HEE! YES, KIDDIES! IT WAS A HORRIBLE TWIST OF FATE! AND DESERVEDLY SO, DON'T YOU THINK? BUT WAIT! MY STORY ISN'T OVER YET... NOT BY A LONG SHOT...
WE'VE STILL GOT ALDAR WATCHING THE UTTER CONFUSION FROM HIS TRAPEZE PLATFORM HIGH OVER THE ARENA...
AW! IT WAS JUST A DUMMY!
NO! IT WAS HIM!
PLEASE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... PLEASE BE SEATED..
THE SHOW WILL GO ON! PLEASE... IF YOU WILL KINDLY TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO THE TRAPEZE PLATFORM...TWO HUNDRED FEET ABOVE THE ARENA FLOOR...
...TO THE FAMOUS FLYING ALDAR...WHO WILL NOW ENTERTAIN YOU WITH HIS FEATS OF DEXTERITY ON THE HIGH-FLYING TRAPEZE! NOTICE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... ALDAR USES NO NET! ARE YOU READY, ALDAR?
READY!
THE DEAFENING ROAR OF THE SNARE DRUMS INCREASES IN VOLUME AS THE FLYING ALDAR SWINGS HIGHER AND HIGHER THROUGH THE AIR AND THEN LEAVES HIS TRAPEZE IN A DEATH DEFYING THREE AND ONE-HALF SOMERSAULT SPIN...
BUT AS HE REACHES OUT TO CATCH THE TRAPEZE SWINGING TOWARD HIM...
A-A-A-A-A-A
HEE, HEE! YEP! THE FLYING ALDAR FLEW ALL THE WAY...TWO HUNDRED FEET... TO THE ARENA FLOOR! WHAT A MESS! FOR YOU SEE, CARLO HAD CUT THE TRAPEZE ROPE IN ORDER TO GET RID OF ALDAR! AND SO THE CROWD GOT QUITE A SHOW THAT AFTERNOON! AND YOU'LL GET QUITE A SHOW WHEN YOU BUY ALL THE OTHER E.C. MAGAZINES! JUST LOOK FOR THEM ON YOUR NEWSTAND... THEY ALL CARRY THE E.C. LABEL!

YOU SAY IT'S A 45-MINUTE BUS TRIP, WITH A TRANSFER, TO THE COMIC BOOK SHOP? YOU SAY IT'S A HARROWING 30-MINUTE DRIVE ON THE EXPRESSWAY TO THE MALL, AND THEN A 30-MINUTE MERRY-GO-ROUND RIDE TO FIND A PARKING PLACE? YOU SAY YOUR TOWN DOESN'T EVEN **HAVE** A COMIC BOOK SHOP OR BOOKSTORE? IS THAT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, BUNKY? WELL, THEN, YOU SHOULD...

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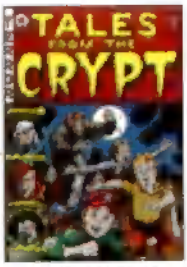

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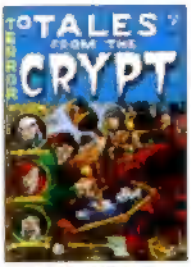

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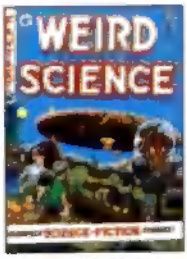

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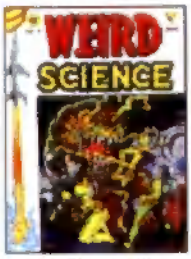

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